

nothing to it (I speak of the internal dome). The settlements are in one or two places very large, one seems as if you could thrust your fist into it, but all the reports we heard in England about its being in danger, and expected to fall, are ridiculous and absurd. It will stand for many a long day yet. There has been no new settlement or great increase in an old one for many years. The ascent into the hall gave me the nearest idea of climbing a chimney I can well imagine; you are literally obliged to drag yourself up a perpendicular iron ladder in the centre of a flue. For all that, the hall will hold sixteen people without incommoding or squeezing. In one of the rooms are preserved some of the original models, but we found it was necessary to have an order to sketch from them.

I have, amongst other places, visited the basilica of S. Paolo, the one that was unfortunately burnt about twenty years back. You remember the view of it exhibited at the Diorama. It is now in progress of restoration on a scale of the greatest splendour, in aid of which the pope is very liberal. Six magnificent columns of oriental alabaster have been employed on the building, sent to Gregory by Ali Pasha. This is a most costly and rare marble, and the effect of the columns is very grand. All the interesting collection of portraits of the popes, and most of the mosaics perished in the flames. The basilica is all deeply interesting, the most ancient churches in existence, mostly dating back to the age of Constantine; they are all more or less enriched with spoils from heathen temples; then come the mosaics and curious sculptures of the succeeding ages, and the cloisters with their quaint columns twisting in every variety of form, all richly inlaid with mosaics, and all sheltering some interesting relics, which, whether genuine or not, have been so accredited for centuries and centuries. Then the magnificent masterpieces of art, the frescos and paintings, and gorgeous decorations of the renaissance, all combine to make them most interesting; each is a little history of the arts and religious feelings of nearly 1,500 years; in each you find something to carry you back to the earlier and more expressive age of the Christian faith. The cloisters of St. John Lateran present a curious mixture of Paganism and Christianity. Roman funeral inscriptions strangely mingled with Christian emblems; decrees of Imperial power with tombs of popes and cardinals; the papal chair of state used in the great Lateran councils side by side, with two columns of the ancient temple at Jerusalem, brought to Rome by the Empress Helena. At each step I found something to carry me back from the dull, plodding, modern world into the mists of bygone days. On such occasions, I am invariably a great dreamer, and stand and think till I almost lose myself in the confusion of brain such thoughts occasion. Notwithstanding all this, I imagine at times, that the old appellation of the "dark ages," against which I used to rail so violently, is very just and appropriate; and that popes, priors, and prelates, were as ignorant as peasants, of aught but the great ambition and lust of power. In the old part of Rome, at every turn, you meet with some ruin, that, spared by the hand of time, would even now have been perfect, but that some pope or stiff-necked baron of the "dark ages," eye and later, wanted a palace or fortress, or having one, repairs were necessary, and where so good or handy a quarry as the Forum? Temples, bridges, tombs, stripped, plundered or swept away, to build palaces and fountains; statues and columns "ground down" for lime! Ancient bronzes melted down for decorating churches! It is really quite sickening to hear and read of all the horrors committed by such "infallibilities." I found the baths of Titus a very interesting ruin. Every one has heard of the famous golden house of Nero; when Titus came to the empire, he built over this palace his baths, putting up cross walls to strengthen the buildings thus used as substructures, and completely rendering it useless, as all light was excluded, at the same time he removed all the works of art into his baths above, all apparently to wipe out the memory of the habitation of such a wretch; in the course of ages, however, these baths are almost entirely swept away, and the accumulation of earth is so great, that vineyards now cover a great portion of the roof, as it were, of Nero's palace,

but as the baths disappeared, so that palace was brought to light, and now we have it, the ancient arrangement almost perfect; the very spot seen where the famous Laocoon stood, and the ceilings still covered with frescos of the days of Nero; these were known in the time of Raphael, and studied by him, and in his frescos at the Loggia, one may easily see the use to which he turned them. The whole history seemed to me interesting, and the beauty, elegance, and freshness of the paintings enhance the pleasure. It would be impossible to expatiate on each ruin; all have their beauties and their peculiar interest, but nothing can give a truer idea of the magnificence and immensity of scale, on which everything was carried out connected with the pleasures of the Roman of Imperial times, than the baths of Caracalla or the Coliseum. One feels perfectly lost in contemplating these enormous and grand masses of ruin. The other evening I mounted to the very top of the Coliseum to see the sun set, and was amply repaid for the risk and trouble. The view, and the lovely tints in the sky—tints you unhappy people in England can form no idea of—were things to revel in. You cannot imagine the clear deep blue that on a fine day we have over head; everything stands out from it, each building and tree, with almost microscopic clearness. . . . J. M. L.

Rome, January, 1846.

#### RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

The prevention of accidents on railways is occupying great attention at the present time. Much ingenuity and much practical knowledge are being directed to this subject; the result is many novel suggestions and some really valuable inventions. One of the latest is Greenbaw's Geometrical Railway, a description of which will be read and the principle developed by means of models, &c., at the Society of Arts, next Wednesday evening. We shall make a point of explaining the merits of this invention in our next number.—Carpenters are now roofing the railway station at Dunbar. The structure is spiken of by a local paper as an ornament to the town. It is built of limestone, edged with ribda.—As a proof of the superior safety of railway travelling, the fact should be universally known, that upwards of two millions of passengers have been carried on the Paris and Rouen line in somewhat less than three years without the slightest accident.—Last week, a branch line was opened on the South-Eastern Railway, leading from Ashford to Canterbury, being a distance of about fifteen miles. It was noticed that the carriages had an unusual springy and unpleasant motion, and this was attributed to the ballast under the sleepers being uneven and spongy, the result of want of traffic and the recent heavy rains.—The inhabitants of Birmingham have taken up the subject of erecting one grand central railway station in their town with great energy and judgment. At a meeting of the town council, held last week, a committee was formed, whose duties will have special reference to this subject.—Mr. Rastrick, the engineer of the Brighton, Lewes, and Hastings line states, that the works will be complete for opening by the first week in May. The Brighton tunnel is sixty yards long, and is completed, except the eastern front, which will be built up as soon as the cutting is cleared away from the front of it. The Fulmer tunnel is 302 yards long, and is completed, except the cornice and coping to the eastern front, which only wait for more favourable weather. The Southover tunnel will be 90 yards long; 20 yards remain to be bricked, and the two fronts have also to be finished.—The embankments of the Sheffield and Manchester line, not long since opened, are reported to have been much affected by the continued rains. As many as forty slips are said to have taken place.—For a considerable period large quantities of coal tar have been sent from Birmingham by railway, to Bristol, for supplying the Great Western Company with creosote (a preparation of coal tar), with which railway sleepers and other timber are saturated. The Boyne viaduct, on the Dublin and Belfast Junction line, is a mile in length, and comprises the heaviest works on the line. The estimate for all the works, now contracted for, including the mile and the viaduct over the Boyne, is 80,000l.—In the neighbourhood

of Huddersfield the railway works in the directions of Manchester and Sheffield are progressing rapidly. For several miles on each side of the town the cuttings and embankments are in a forward state; the foundations and walls of the extensive and lofty viaduct, on the east side of the town, are also fast emerging from the surface, and the works of the Huddersfield tunnel are being commenced.—In order to gratify his constituents, Mr. Hudson caused a special train to convey copies of the new morning paper containing a report of Sir Robert Peel's commercial speech. The paper was on the Mayor of Sunderland's breakfast-table, 268 miles from the metropolis, at the same time as in the London clubs.—The *Railway Chronicle* gives the following personal gossip respecting the engineers of the Italian lines:—Mr. Stephenson furnished the plans for the line from Leghorn to Pisa; Mr. Brunel those for the lines from Genoa to Turin. The Italian engineers entrusted with executing lines to their own country are—Giorgio Milani, from Milan to Venice; Castinelli, from Pistoja to Florence; Pianigini, from Siena to Empoli; Vegni, from Seravezza to Viareggio; Cini, from Pistoja to Poretta; Giuseppe Pontelli, from Genoa to Leghorn. The Italian engineers employed on railways in other countries are—Francesconi, on the Austrian Northern; Negrelli, from Basel to Zurich; and Dallari, from Dijon to Mulhausen.

#### THE BRITISH INSTITUTION.

THE exhibition of works of British artists opened on Monday last. It includes 492 pictures, and 11 models and pieces of sculpture. Turner, Creswick, F. Goodall, D. Roberts, C. Landseer, Danby, Lauder, Inskip, Lancee, Eddy, Lee, Fraser, Claxton, Frim, Copley Fielding, Bright, Linnell, Pyne, F. R. Pickersgill, &c., are amongst the exhibitors, but taken as a whole we cannot term the collection an advance on former years. Pretty, pretty, pretty, and little beyond. Frith's "Norah Crichton," No. 21, is an exquisite little picture—

"Beauty lies

In many eyes.

But love in yours—my Norah Crichton."

No. 180, "The Poppy of Andalusia," by Inskip, Lancee's fruit pieces, Branwhite's "Frost-Scene" (No. 191), two or three sketches by Bright, "Snowdon" by Pyne (No. 360), are amongst the gems of the exhibition, and would be in any other. Goodall's "Fair-struck" (No. 93), is a piece of admirable execution, and his large picture "The Britanny Conscript leaving home" (No. 134), though perhaps inferior to his "Irish Wake," last year, is most honourable to the English school.

#### BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.

A meeting took place on the 4th instant, when Mr. Croker read an account of Brecon Priory, accompanied by numerous drawings by Major Davis. A beautiful bronze statue was exhibited by Captain O'Malley, R.N. It represented a Venus at her toilette, and was executed in the highest style of art; it had been discovered at Mogla in Asia Minor. A paper was then read from Professor Henslow on the discovery of an ancient burial place at Kingston in Derbyshire, with drawings of twelve urns; more than 200 of these cinerary urns were destroyed by the workmen; they were found placed in trenches about 4 feet apart, each appeared to have been covered over at its mouth by a lump of sandstone, most of them contained burnt bones. Mr. Richardson of Greenwich, forwarded some rubbings from brasses of Thos. Leland, Prior of Lewes, date 1433, and others. Mr. C. R. Smith and Mr. W. Stothard exhibited some carvings in wood, which had been discovered in the Thames beneath old London Bridge, doubtless from the Chapel of St. Thomas, which formerly stood there. Mr. Smith made some remarks on these and similar personifications of the deity in various countries—as "God Pope," "God Emperor," &c. Mr. John Bell exhibited drawings of sepulchral slabs discovered at New-castle, and Dr. Pettigrew, a large drawing of the Roman Villa discovered at Maidstone by Mr. Charles. Mr. Croker then read an amusing paper on the curious old custom of "hunting the wren," which was further illustrated by remarks from Messrs. Wright, Halliwell, and Smith.